



ACT Institute
for Recovery-Based Practice

FAMILY SPECIALIST CLINICAL CARE CALL JULY 17, 2020

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND NATURAL SUPPORTERS DURING COVID-19

The ACT Institute hosted a Family Specialist Clinical Care Call on Friday, July 17, 2020 from 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM co-facilitated by ACT Institute Director Helle Thorning and Social Work Intern Joshua Binag.

During this call, Family Specialists discussed the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on Family Specialists and their Participants, the recent events of police brutality and the impact it has had on Family Specialists, their Participants, and their relationship with law enforcement, and issues related to systemic, anti-Black racism and White supremacy. Family specialists discussed the challenges that they and their participants have experienced during the COVID-19 lockdown.

First, Family Specialists reported having a difficult time engaging Participants and families remotely. They shared that ACT participants struggled with social isolation and other psychiatric symptoms due to the fear of spreading the virus to family members and the lack of social supports that mainly consisted of entities closed during the statewide lockdown. Social Work Intern Joshua Binag shared a safety planning worksheet that Family Specialists could use in collaboration with their participants to safely engage with activities outside of quarantine (i.e. going to the park, going to a restaurant, etc.).

In the wake of George Floyd's death at the hands of law enforcement, Family Specialists also reflected upon the impact that it has had on their Participants and their relationship with law enforcement. Family Specialists shared that ACT Participants, primarily those that were formerly incarcerated or have a past or current history with the criminal justice system, became increasingly stressed. Families and Family Specialists expressed mutual fears that an interaction between an ACT participant and law enforcement could cause the Participant to be severely harmed.

In light of these events, they also shared that families were asking providers to not involve law enforcement due to the impact it could have on an ACT participant's psychological wellbeing. However, Family Specialists reported providing additional support to families by providing space to vent and educating participants and families of their rights.

The Resources Guide provides the presentation slides and a link to a free COVID-19 Safety Plan worksheet and instructional video.

We thank you for your time, participation, and all the work you do!

If you would like to learn more about ACT Institute or how we can support your ACT Team, please contact us at ACTinst@nyspi.columbia.edu

RESOURCES GUIDE

Powerpoint

[COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)